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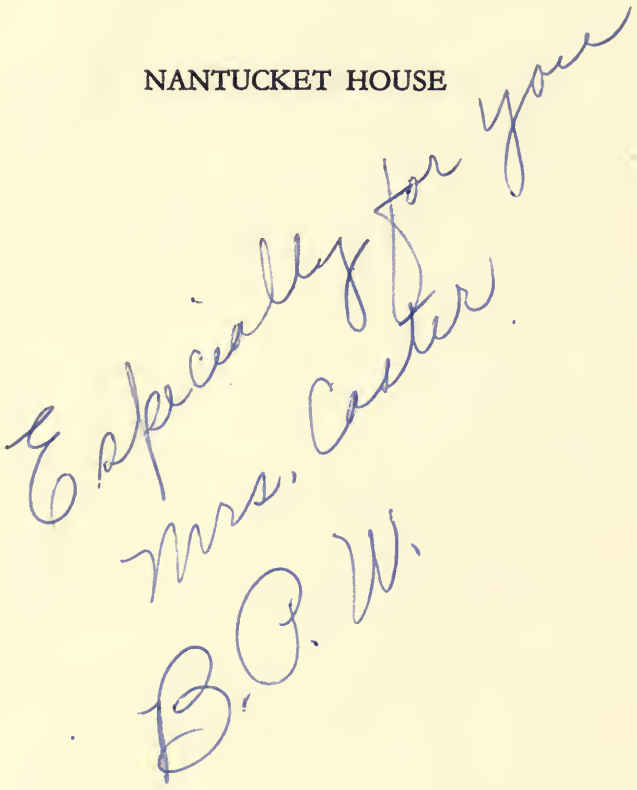
NANTUCKET HOUSE



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NANTUCKET HOUSE

By

Bettie Payne Welles

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NANTUCKET HOUSE

This quiet house stands dull and grey,
With vacant eyes that search the bay
For tenants that have moved away.

It stands alone upon a hill,
Lost in dreams that live there still,
When dusk brings the song of a whippoorwill.

On the rambling fence white roses cling,
Scattering petaled snow of spring,
While I am here remembering.

Tales of an old sea-captain's boast,
A thudding surf, and a storm-lashed coast,
Haunted signs of a lost ship's ghost!

Today there is common village talk
Of a thin white figure that is seen to stalk
Each night at twelve on the widow's walk.

Time and weather have left deep scars
On this quiet house of the salty tars,
As it snuggles close to night and the stars!

NEW ENGLAND AUNT

Her heart recalls
The rambling walls
Of a peaceful countryside.
Hard stubborn soil,
Eternal toil
Tilled with Pilgrim pride.

Cranberry bogs,
Old fallen logs,
November's chilly nights;
A copper moon,
The cry of a loon,
And glowing fire lights.

We always know
When her voice is low,
And she gives us a caress,
Her heart recalls
Old rambling walls
With nostalgic tenderness!

CHRISTMAS EVES REMEMBERED

Gay, twinkling, ornaments tonight,
Like jewels, hang on the tree,
They seem to lead me by the hand
Down the lane of memory.

I am a little child again,
Our tree with candle light,
Sends out a cheer to all who pass
Our house on Christmas night.

Mother plays the organ, we sing
The carols of famed renown,
And listen to the church bells ring
Across the snow-wrapped town.

Dad tells us of the Wise Men
Who follow a bright star,
How it guides them to a manger
Where Mary and Jesus are.

Gay, twinkling ornaments tonight,
Like jewels, hang on the tree.
They seem to lead me by the hand
Down the lane of memory!

I HAVE FAITH

I have faith that each small star
Gives out its silver light.
I have faith that a bright dawn
Comes after every night.

I have faith that a miracle
Is born from an acorn, a clod or stone,
And I have faith that I do not walk
Life's rugged miles alone!

DESERT MONARCH

The tall
Saguro stands
Tree-like in height and size.
Its candelabra arms touch the
Blue skies!

PRAYER GARDEN

There is a little garden
All quiet and serene,
And every plant that grows there
Is a lush and vivid green.

There is a tiny, tiny spot
Where I always say a prayer.
This garden is in my heart
And God is always there.

WINTER NIGHT

Soft snow
Falling at night
Brings calm serenity
To God's world wrapped in a mantle
Of white!

FIRESIDE EVENING

Sitting by the fire on a cold and rainy night
I watch the fading embers cast a glowing light.
I fancy in these embers that ghosts return to me,
And silent shadows creep down my lanes of memory.
Here come childhood playmates, just as they were then,
Time has changed those playmates into women and men.
No longer are they children preparing lessons for school,
Joining in laughter at a prank or broken rule.
Life and experience have taken them in charge,
As separately they drift along, each master of his barge.
So it is with prayers I think of them tonight,
And ask the Heavenly Father to guide each barge aright!

OCTOBER CARNIVAL

Autumn
Softly hums a
Hurdy-gurdy tune and
A cricket plays his violin
To stars!

WHITE ROSE ON MOTHER'S DAY

Today I wear a white rose,
Last year I wore a red,
Today my heart takes courage,
From the loving things she said.

From the whiteness in this blossom
In this golden heart I see
The total sum of everything
That Mother meant to me!

NIGHT VIEW FROM THE AIR

My heart
Finds peace tonight
Above the snarling sounds
Of traffic. I am pillowed with
The stars!

UNITY IS PATTERNED

We find unity
In such humble things
As white surf on the quiet sand,
The song a swallow sings,
A rose beside the garden walk
A bed of daffodils,
The gold that grows in poppies
On the California hills.
Unity is patterned
In every stone and clod,
And every one finds unity
Who walks alone with God!

REWARD

He shoved and pushed to make his way
And reach his selfish goal,
He did not care if he should slay
Another poet's soul.
He scoffed at what the prophets said,
'Kindness goes with success.'
He won. Today he breaks his bread
In bitter loneliness.

KEEP SINGING

Keep singing the song you have in your heart,
Though your world of today seems coming apart,
Without the melody the song disappears,
And your heart only garners new worries and fears.
Keep humming the tune, let your heart sing,
Hold fast to the fragments of joy it can bring.
What do they matter, these cares of today?
The song in your heart keeps them away.
O, never, once think the man on fame's road
Is content with his lot. He carried a load.
His heart kept its song as he passed by life's streams
He treasured the tune. He nourished his dreams.
Keep singing the song you have in your heart,
And your daily world cannot tumble apart!

DESERT VISTA

I stand and view the pastel change
Of mauve and gold across the range
Where mountain peaks piled high with snow,
Deepen in the afterglow.

Here majestic pine trees raise
Stately heads in silent praise,
Here Mojave winds blow free
And here I stand in reverie!

NAVAJO RUG WEAVER

To and fro her brown hands go,
As she weaves a patterned dream.
In her patient eyes there is a glow,
To and fro her brown hands go.
Her skill is the skill of the Navajo,
Her theme is the humble weaver's theme.
To and fro her brown hands go,
As she weaves her patterned dream!

LOVE

What is love, but a heart grown tall,
Reaching beyond life's grey stone wall.

What is love, but a heart grown strong,
Lifting a burden with a song.

What is love, but a heart whose smiles
Gives help and courage on rugged miles.

What is love, but a heart whose calm
Pours out to all a quiet psalm,

And all men's hearts are fed
Manna, and they are comforted.

GOD'S MIRACLE

I watched
A bud unfold
I saw it grow and grow,
And then one day the bud became
A rose!

WASH DAY MAGIC

I love the sight of clean white sheets
Flown by the summer's breeze,
Billowed like sails of clipper ships
Upon deep azure seas.

I love the fragrant cleanly smell
Of sunshine on my pillow,
To-night I'll board the sand man's train
And join the wisp-of-willow.

TRIOLET TO SPRING

My ironing will have to wait
For April leads my heart astray.
I know this is a spring time trait,
My ironing will have to wait.
My house is in a cluttered state,
So I will write a roundelet,
My ironing will have to wait
For April leads my heart astray!

AUTUMN NIGHT

Gypsy violins are playing
Tonight by autumn fires
Lover's hearts are saying
Gypsy violins are playing.
A harvest moon is betraying
Lost loves and old desires,
Gypsy violins are playing
Tonight by autumn fires!

MOOD FOR AUTUMN

Across the fields October flings
Hands full of scarlet leaves,
And Nature adds a golden thread
To the tapestry she weaves!

HILLS OF AVALON

High on the hills that I know well
I have taken my soul to dwell,
Alone in my crystal tower
I await each enchanted hour.

I see the rosy-fingered dawn,
Break slowly over Avalon.
I look upon a turquoise sea
And marvel at the pagentry.

Of sunlight, moonlight, wind and stars
God-given wonder which is ours;
These are the scenes I gaze upon
High on the hills of Avalon!

SNOW SCENE IN SEQUOIA

Tiptoe, tiptoe softly
For Autumn has gone to bed
And Winter throws a fleecy shawl
Across each Sequoia's head!

HUMBLE THINGS

I love the humble things,
The pigeons in the park,
Sunshine in the garden,
Moonbeams in the dark.

Autumn in the country,
When trees are gaily dressed
With a million humble things
All of us are blessed!

TO A NEW BABY

New baby, with petaled toes,
And tiny, up-turned, shell-pink nose,
I see your folded infant hands,
What are your dreamy wonderlands?

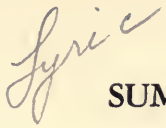
I see a smile upon your lips,
I touch your baby finger-tips,
Your head gives a sleepy nod,
And I feel very close to God!

HOLIDAY SENTRIES

Mail boxes on the country road
Cheerfully display their load
With red flags up, their signals say,
' The postman passed along our way,
Now we're bulging with good news,
We've packages of dolls and shoes,
Gifts for Majorie, Nell and Tim,
And bright new skates for little Jim.
We've papers, letters, cards and books,
And catalogues with newest looks.'
Joyfully each box displays
The jolly signs of holidays!

GHOST TOWN COURTHOUSE

Tall and
Gaunt upon a
Hill it stands with vacant
Eyes staring into sunsets of
The years!



SUMMER IS HERE

Summer is here
How do I know?
The swallows called me
From the old apple tree
By the barn.
Summer is here,
How did I guess?
Now I must confess
The new mown hay
Has a perfect way
Of saying it's summer!

ANOTHER DAY

Tomorrow is another day
Isn't that a blessing?
Should I toil my life away?
Tomorrow is another day.
There is so much to do and say —
(Perhaps I should be pressing)
Tomorrow is another day —
Isn't that a blessing?

INVENTORY

Here's a birdless Coo Coo clock
And a wooden box with a broken lock,
A little dish for nuts and dates,
And a half a dozen salad plates,
A diary of treasured days,
A thumb-worn book of Ibsen's plays,
A powder box that plays off key,
A thriller-diller mystery.
Candle sticks and bits of candle,
A cookie jar without a handle,
Some gingham scraps to make a rug,
A little dog by a fire plug,
Out-of-adjustment bathroom scales,
All garnered loot from rummage sales!

I WONDER WHY

The months of April, May and June
Reap every poet's rhyme and tune,
They write gay verse of April's showers,
And carol reams to May's fresh powers,
Of June they never cease to sing —
Her days, her charms and everything,
But poor old August and July
Are always slighted — and I wonder Why?

DESERT WIND

Listen!
A faint dry sound,
Like steps of passing ghosts,
Is heard as tumbleweeds skit with
The wind!

TRIOLET TO AN OLD BARN

The old barn leans against the sky,
Sunset throws her contraband.
Countless years have passed it by,
The old barn leans against the sky.
Yucca candles light the sand,
April's muffled breezes sigh,
The old barn leans against the sky,
Sunset throws her contraband!

TEENAGE DAUGHTER

How strange to be alone in this house
With only the ticking of the clock
To break the stillness. At last I am alone!
Alone to think, to dream, and to create a dream.
The silence is cool, fresh water on parched lips.
(There is the telephone. The spell is broken)
A voice asks for Elizabeth. She is not home.
I will take the message. (Now I will create my dream)
Outside someone whistles. I must see who he is.
He is Jim the boy across the street. He asks for Elizabeth.
She is not home. She will be gone all day.
Now I will create my dream. (The door bell rings)
The postman has a letter for Elizabeth. . . .
Postage 1c due! My morning is gone,
And with it my creations have gone. Oh, well,
I do not mind. Elizabeth is young,
There will be long quiet years when I'm alone
Then all I will have will be my dreams!

BROKEN TRAILS

They say the broken trails are best
For here the weary heart has known
The snow upon the summit's crest
Where winter winds have often blown.

They say the unmarked trails are rough
And here men must grow strong and bold,
They find endurance and are tough
They triumph over frost and cold.

Our days are spent on broken trails
We have become too hard and proud,
O, God, remember. Hear our wails,
Be with us when we cry aloud!

IN MEMORIAM

(of all little children dead because of war)

The stars
That shine tonight
Are tears upon my heart
For little ones who never saw
Them shine!

BOOM TOWN BY MOONLIGHT

Like a feeble crone
With a toothless grin
The town greets the moon,
Her smile worn thin!

Years have passed since
The town went mad,
And men stripped the lode
Of the wealth she had.

From the boarded walk,
And the gaudy halls,
Shadows stalk
As the moonlight falls.

The moon tonight
Greets a thousand hosts
Of a quaint old town
With a thousand ghosts!

NOSTALGIC LONGING

The mesa stretches far and wide,
Where mavericks roam and cowhands ride.
Beneath night's canopy of stars,
Ranch guests hear strumming of guitars.
Cowhands gather around a fire
And yodle ballads they desire,
Friendliness enfolds the camp,
These bronze men wear the outdoor stamp
Of living clean-cut busy lives,
Where rugged Western beauty thrives.
Nostalgic longing fills my heart,
And I wish I shared a part
Of mesa lands and starry nights,
With the warm, soft glow of
Campfire lights!

HIGHWAYS

Highways cross the desert
Highways climb the hills,
Highways pass through little towns
With homes and daffodils.
Highways skirt pine forests,
With rushing mountain streams,
Highways unravel for us
A wonderland of dreams!

BELLS OF SAN XAVIER DEL BAC

(Spanish Mission in Arizona)

At the vesper hour
These ancient bells
Are clothed in power.
Etched there alone
Against blue skies
They speak of faith
That never dies!

HAUNTED COURTYARD

They say the courtyard is haunted
That ghosts still linger there,
Though the sisters have long departed
Their steps are heard on the stair.
There are candle lights in the windows,
And a rustle of skirts in the hall,
As a shadowy lover scales the vines
That cling to the courtyard wall.
There is a creaking of ancient shutters,
As dusk enfolds the day,
And all of these eerie noises come
When daylight creeps away.
But when you sit in the courtyard,
You forget each little sound,
For the sunshine is weaving
Shadow patterns across the ground.
And this is old New Orleans,
With her dusky beauty there,
So who cares if the courtyard is haunted,
Or if ghosts glide on the stair!

NEW ORLEANS PORTRAIT

Daughter of a dusky queen
Dancing to a tambourine,
She twirls her multicolored skirts
And flirts and flirts and flirts!

SEPTEMBER KEEPS A RENDEZVOUS

September keeps a rendezvous
On Autumn's gay estate
And from my shaded patio
I watch September wait.

Her copper tresses in the sun
Shine like pennies bright and new.
I see a smile upon her lips.
Who shares her rendezvous?

Who makes her heart throb?
What lover brings such bliss?
Patiently I wait and see
Indian summer steal a kiss!

THIS I REMEMBER

The loss of my first front tooth,
My childhood pal of five named Ruth,
Secrets we had down by the spring.
I remember our grapevine swing,
Our playhouse under the big oak tree,
Broken dishes, and serving tea.
Hot summer days spent in the shade
Selling penny cups of lemonade.
The time dad drove home our first car,
Playmates gathered from near and far.
For marbles or a lollypop
I allowed each chum to climb on top.
These were times of mumps and measles,
Rainy days indoors with sneazles,
And there was a little mongrel pup
To add to my days of growing up!

BLUES OF HAWAII

Blue is the color of
Azure skies,
And the color of a
Valley paradise.
Blue is the color
Of a mountain's shoulders,
Of lupine sands,
And a canyon's boulders.
Blue is the color sunset spills
Across the tops of the far-off hills.
Blue is the color
Of lakes and streams,
Blue is the color
We paint our dreams!

HONOLULU AT NIGHT

From the hilltops
Down to the sea
I view the sequened town,
A giant bowl of stars
Turned upside down.

LITTLE BEGGAR

A pup-faced dog is at my knee
His brown eyes softly pleading.
To look in them you would think,
' He's never had a feeding.'
With soulful looks and little sighs
He gets my choicest crumb,
What human being dares to say,
' Animals are dumb.'

WALL FLOWERS

Shasta daisies in white dresses
Primly lift their yellow faces
To greet the sun.
The dew has played a little trick
And left a drop on every lip
And all in fun!

COUPLET TO A POET

The poet portrays his finest art
When he dips his pen into his heart.

BLACK BRANT FLYING

My heart envies the swift black brant
Whose wings are spread in flight,
For they leave their nests on the tundra
In the land of the northern light.

I envy their long journey south,
Across the sky and the sea,
And the whirring sound of their dark wings
Sets my chained heart free!

For I am their fellow traveler,
Beneath the stars and the moon,
My dreams are with them on the wind,
Or in the marshy deep lagoon!

MANHATTAN HOKKU

Skyscrapers tower
Now where Redskins traded rum
And bright beads for land!

SMALL BOYS AT THE BEACH

Give them the tide-washed shore,
To sprint and run their races,
Give them the white surf
And spindrift in their faces.

Give them the long, long hours
Of a summer afternoon,
To build a wet sand castle
With a spade or with a spoon.

Give them a crooked stick,
One that's good for fishing,
And add to this a piece of string,
One that's good for wishing.

Fill their hands with treasures,
More than they can hold,
Shells, driftwood, a lobster's claw,
And smooth rocks flecked with gold.

Pitch their tent by the ocean,
Snuggle them warm for the night,
Give each a drink of water,
Hand each his own flash light,

Then in the inky blackness
Watch the flash lights gleam,
And wait until each small boy
Is pillowed with his dream!

GOOD HEART CLEANING

I found a ragged lover's cloak
Worn thin, frayed at the seams.
I found some folded memories,
And hordes of tarnished dreams.

Among them were some tattered quarrels,
And chips I'd worn upon my sleeve,
With a few old blackened embers
Burned cold one summer's eve.

Here I found some dusty tools,
Long since tucked away,
A number of unfinished tasks
Begun one youthful May.

Here were good intentions,
Hidden snugly in a chest,
And countless bits of this and that
Which I remembered best.

I found my heart an attic
Cluttered beyond meaning,
Then April brought her sunny days
To do my good heart cleaning!

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